

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY CALLS FOR 4-YEAR EXTENSION OF HOG MORATORIUM

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley is calling for a 4-year extension on the moratorium for new and expanded swine operations that employ lagoon and spray irrigation systems in North Carolina, a move that would push the ban to Sept. 1, 2007.

“We must make certain that this is the last time that North Carolina extends its moratorium,” Easley said. “It’s time to make real progress and move away from this antiquated system. We need to develop new technologies that will allow the pork industry in North Carolina to continue to prosper without posing a threat to public health and the environment.

“Let me be perfectly clear, this moratorium is not just about no more lagoons,” he said. “It is about providing the time to convert the existing lagoon and spray system to a new, more environmentally sustainable system.”

First enacted in August 1997, the moratorium on new and expanded swine farms applies to operations with 250 or more hogs. Only 16 swine farms across the state are employing innovative technology. The ban has been extended twice previously and is slated to expire Sept. 1.

Easley said the 4-year extension would allow the state, researchers and hog farmers needed time “to ensure that new technologies that have been identified through the process set out in the Smithfield agreement can be tested and proven in the field. Once this is done, we must move aggressively to conversion.”

While serving as Attorney General in 2000, Easley reached an historic agreement with Smithfield Foods Inc. that set the stage for phasing out open-air lagoons and sprayfields in North Carolina. The company and its subsidiaries agreed to pay \$15 million to N.C. State University for new technology development and \$50 million over the next 25 years toward environmental improvements and compliance monitoring.

North Carolina has approximately 2,300 large-scale swine operations, those with 250 or more head. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources inspects the facilities twice annually, provides technical assistance and oversees compliance.

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